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SUBJECT: GUIDANCE: 1701 CONSULTATIONS, NOV. 10

¶1. (U) This is an action message. Please see Paragraph 3.

¶2. (U) Mission may draw on the building blocks at paragraph three for the November 10 Security Council consultation on the eleventh semi-annual report of the Secretary General on the implementation of UNSC resolution 1701 (2006).

¶3. (SBU) Begin Building Blocks:

-- Thank you (Special Coordinator Williams and Assistant Secretary-General Mulet) for your briefing(s).

-- Mr. President, reading this 11th report and its detailed account of mounting violations of resolution 1701 leaves the clear impression that progress on the implementation of resolution 1701 has stalled, and the lack of a strong response from the Lebanese government or this Council to the recent rocket attacks and other security incidents in the south sends a message to armed groups in Lebanon that they may engage in violent acts with impunity. We have returned to the sort of tit-for-tat exchanges across the Blue Line that led inexorably to the devastating 2006 war between Israel and Hizballah. We should not think that simply because we have expanded the ranks of peacekeepers in the south that these events cannot repeat themselves. I worry that we will relive history unless we take strong, swift action and, via the continued efforts of the UN Special Coordinator for Lebanon and UNIFIL, assist the Lebanese government in doing the same.

-- Mr. President, we are bearing witness to a worrying pattern of inaction and obfuscation. For example, the Secretary-General's most recent report does not directly refute Hizballah's claim that the group "continues to abide by the requirements of resolution 1701" because it is not transferring new weaponry into south Lebanon. This claim is patently untrue. Resolution 1701 makes no such distinction, but rather calls clearly and simply for the maintenance of a zone free of all unauthorized weapons. The explosion of a Hizballah weapons depot in Khirbat Selim and the group's subsequent interference with UNIFIL's investigation demonstrates Hizballah's open defiance of the resolutions of this Council. We should not pretend otherwise. At the same time, Hizballah's refusal to begin a process of disarmament and to submit decisions of war and peace to the elected government of Lebanon, emboldens other militias, hinders the Lebanese government's authority, and risks another round of conflict.

-- South Lebanon has again become a launching pad for rocket attacks on northern Israel. Despite the efforts of the Lebanese Armed Forces and UNIFIL we have witnessed five launches already this year. We urge Lebanon's next government to take concrete steps to implement the decision of the country's national dialogue, taken twice, to disarm Palestinian groups outside Lebanon's refugee camps as a first step toward the disarmament of all militias in Lebanon. I

would also suggest that this Council and UNIFIL troop contributors consider whether UNIFIL's current mandate is sufficient, in light of recent events, to implement its charge under resolution 1701. We also urge UNIFIL and the Lebanese Armed Forces to further step up their patrolling tempo in south Lebanon and to request any assistance that they deem necessary to fulfill their mission. Neither this Council nor Lebanon can afford further inaction.

-- We also call upon Syria and Iran to end their material support to Hizballah and other militias in Lebanon, which is a clear violation of a legally binding provision of 1701. I cannot underscore this point enough. The November 4 discovery of a concealed arms shipment in commercial shipping containers, clearly manifested from Iran to Syria, in violation of resolution 1747, provides unambiguous evidence of the destabilizing proliferation of arms in the region. The fact that these arms were concealed behind bags of polyethylene, declared as civilian cargo, and hidden among other shipping containers strongly implies that both Iran and the shipment's intended recipient understood that they were violating resolution 1747.

-- We also remain deeply concerned by the presence of PFLP-GC and Fatah al-Intifada along the Lebanese-Syrian border and near Beirut. We are in full agreement with the Secretary-General when he notes that "the presence of these military bases continues to compromise Lebanese sovereignty and governmental authority." While the Secretary-General's report calls upon the Lebanese government to close these bases, I note that the Syrian government bears special responsibility to assist in their dismantlement, as these militias receive material support from Syria and are headquartered in Damascus.

-- At the same time, despite multiple pledges, Syria has taken no steps toward the delineation of its border with Lebanon. In its letter of July 7, 2009 to this Council, Syria reiterated that it was prepared to begin delineating the border, starting from the north, and we call on Syria to fulfill its pledges, so that Lebanon can secure its border against weapons smuggling.

-- We also urge the international community to assist Lebanon's efforts to implement resolution 1701 by providing support to Lebanese security services; the United States has to date provided over half a billion dollars. We understand that the Lebanese government will shortly submit a request for donor funding to support to rollout of a new force to secure its eastern border with Syria. This will provide an excellent opportunity for new donors to step forward, and for existing donors to increase their assistance.

-- In order to maintain international support, it will be important for Lebanon's new government, in cooperation with President Michel Sleiman, to take bold steps on the implementation of resolution 1701, continuing the tireless efforts of outgoing Prime Minister Fouad Siniora. We look forward to the incoming Lebanese government clearly stating its intent to pursue the full implementation of resolution 1701 while encouraging and empowering the Lebanese Armed Forces to perform its mission in support of that resolution. We also look forward to the continuation of Lebanon's national dialogue process, with the objective disbanding all militias, most notably Hizballah, and enshrining the Lebanese government as the sole arbiter of matters of war and peace for the people of Lebanon.

-- Mr. President, we welcome Israel's commitment to the full implementation of resolution 1701 and, in that regard, urge Israel to withdraw immediately from the northern part of Ghajar village, to curtail its overflights of Lebanese territory, and to fully respect the Blue Line and Lebanon's sovereignty.

-- We also welcome the report's observation that the monthly tripartite meetings are "an essential mechanism to identify and address security and military operational issues with the

parties and to reinforce the cessation of hostilities." As the implementation of 1701 proceeds in the direction of a permanent cease-fire, we hope the parties will give serious consideration to updating and reinstituting the Israeli-Lebanese General Armistice Agreement. The implementation of 1701, leading to a permanent cease-fire between the parties enshrined in a renewed and updated armistice is, in our view, the foundation for eventual peace between Lebanon and Israel

-- Mr. President, the Secretary-General has noted Lebanon and Israel's oft-stated commitment to the full implementation of resolution 1701. Such statements are welcome, but should be matched with clear action by these states, this Council, and UNIFIL. We applaud the work of the Secretary General, his representatives in Lebanon, and UNIFIL, and pledge our continued support to their efforts to fully implement resolution 1701. However, without a firm response to ongoing violations of this resolution, what progress Lebanon and this Council have realized since 2006 could be lost, and another round of hostilities, with devastating consequences for Lebanon and the region, is likely to ensue. The United States urges Lebanon and this Council not to stand idly by and allow history to repeat itself.

End Building Blocks.  
CLINTON